



বিশ্ব বন্দেছিলো- পদ্মা সেতু 'সম্ভব না' একজন প্রধানমন্ত্রী আর ১৬ কোটি বাঙালি বলেছিলো- 'কেন না!'

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Cheated, abused in Saudi Arabia

127 female domestic workers return home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many Bangladeshi female migrant workers returning from Saudi Arabia alleged that they had been subjected to physical and sexual abuse and denied salaries by their employers.

Some of them said they were legally recruited as domestic workers but were instead used as sex workers in the oil-rich Arab country, the biggest overseas labour market for Bangladeshi workers. The country has been recruiting a high number of female domestic workers since 2016.

The number of such Bangladeshi workers going to the Kingdom was over 68,000 in 2016 and rose to over 83,000 in 2017.

Sabrina Akhter (not her real name), 25, one of 127 female domestic workers who returned home on Thursday night, said since her arrival in Saudi Arabia in late September last year, she was taken to different apartments where men of Arab descent "tortured" her.

To escape the violence, she somehow managed to call her husband in Dhaka, a construction worker, who contacted the recruiting agent and the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

Subsequently, Sabrina was taken to the safe home run by the Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh and then repatriated home in a Saudi Airlines flight Thursday night.

"I have serious pain in my waist and head. I regret going to Saudi Arabia," Sabrina told The Daily Star yesterday over phone from her rented house in Kamrangirchar in the city.

"I received no salary but only violence and sickness during my days in Arab," she said.

Her husband Mohammad Zakaria (not his real name) said his dealings with the manpower brokers since Sabrina's allegations of abuses and conversations with Sabrina reveal a grim picture of the conditions female domestic workers in Saudi Arabia live in.

"Though they all go legally through recruiting agencies, many of those who are less than 28-years old and are somewhat good-looking are employed in the sex trade," he said, quoting his wife.

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Covering themselves with blankets and other warm clothes, teachers of ebtadai madrasas lie in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club in the biting cold around 6:30am yesterday. They have been staging an indefinite hunger strike there since Tuesday, demanding nationalisation of all the registered ebtadai madrasas under Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

GRAFT REMARK ROW AL threatens Khaleda Zia with counter legal notice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will be served with a counter legal notice in connection to the one she sent to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"Just wait, they [Khaleda] will be served with a legal notice for sending one to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on a fake and false ground," the told reporters in Kamalapur area in the capital.

He claimed the PM disclosed the information about "Zia family's corruption" based on national and international media reports.

On December 20 last year, Khaleda sent a legal notice to Hasina,

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Outrage over racist remarks by Trump

He describes some African nations as 'shithole' countries; UN official decries remarks as 'shocking and shameful'

AFP, Washington

Outrage mounted yesterday over US President Donald Trump's reported description of African nations, Haiti and El Salvador as "shithole" countries, with the United Nations slamming his comments as "racist".

During a Thursday meeting with lawmakers on immigration reform, Trump demanded to know why the US should accept citizens from what he called "shithole" countries, according to comments first reported by the Washington Post.

The reported comments angered among Democrats and Republicans and revived questions about Trump's tendency to make racially charged remarks.

They also spurred a harsh reaction from the UN, with rights office spokesman Rupert Colville describing them as "shocking and shameful."

"Sorry, but there is no other word one can



use but 'racist,'" he told reporters in Geneva.

"You cannot dismiss entire countries and continents as 'shitholes' whose entire populations, who are not white, are therefore not welcome", he added.

The African Union said President Donald Trump's reported description of African nations as "shithole countries" broke with "accepted behaviour" and was upsetting.

Ebba Kalondo, spokeswoman for AU Chairperson Moussa Faki, told AFP that Trump's statement "truly flies in the face of accepted behaviour and practice."

Botswana's government yesterday summoned the US ambassador to complain over remarks reportedly made by Trump.

Trump met with lawmakers at the White House to discuss a proposed bipartisan deal that would limit immigrants from bringing family members into the country, and

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An act of honesty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

In a world where wholesome stories are often buried under an avalanche of negativity, it is all too easy to just give in and not bother with issues of morality and virtues.

Unless of course they come so naturally, that you never even stop to think about them and even go out of your way for them.

Sabir Uddin, a rickshaw puller in Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur, is one such individual. The 55-year old showed a great example of his honesty, by returning a wallet to its owner hours after he found it on Thursday.

Zaman Uddin, who runs a computer shop at Jewellers Pattry area in the upazila, said he hired a rickshaw on Thursday noon to go home from work. After reaching his destination, he went for his wallet kept in his trousers' pocket to pay the fare.

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Deep, buried glaciers spotted on Mars



AFP, Miami

Buried glaciers have been spotted on Mars, offering new hints about how much water may be accessible on the Red Planet and where it is located, researchers said Thursday.

Although ice has long been known to exist on Mars, a better understanding of its depth and location could be vital to future human explorers, said the report in the US journal Science.

"Astronauts could essentially just go there with a bucket and a shovel and get all the water they need," said co-author Shane Byrne of the University of Arizona Lunar and Planetary Laboratory in Tucson.

A total of eight ice sites, some as shallow as a few

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10 hurt as BCL factions clash in Pabna

Medical college closed for indefinite period

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Authorities have closed Pabna Medical College for an indefinite period after two groups of Chhatra League activists clashed early yesterday. At least 10 students were injured in the incident.

The clash ensued between the supporters of medical college unit BCL President Mahfuz Nayan and Secretary Aditiya De over establishing dominance on the campus, said police.

Mahfuz leads Rotary Club, a voluntary organisation, on the campus and Aditiya leads Medicine Club, another voluntary organisation, campus sources said.

The Medicine Club organised a reception for the freshers on Thursday night. The supporters of Mahfuz entered the programme, and the two groups locked in an altercation over teasing girl students, said Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station.

On information, police went to the spot and brought the situation under control, he added.

Following the altercation, followers of Mahfuz attacked their rivals at Bangabandhu Hall around 1:00am. The two groups were then locked in a clash that left 10 BCL activists hurt, the OC said.

Seven of them were admitted to Pabna Medical College Hospital.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mahfuz and Aditiya

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Brick kilns polluting air, destroying farmland

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Bandarban

With the start of the brick-making season, dozens of illegal brick kilns have started operation inside the forests and near many schools in Bandarban, polluting environment in the hills.

The owners of the brick kilns are running their business despite a restriction from the authorities concerned and even ignoring the locals' objections.

The most affected villages are Shivatoli Para, Mong Ba Ching Para, U Mra Mong Headman Para and Meaung Para of remote Faitong area under Lama upazila.

Residents of these villages alleged the brick kilns owners have threatened them whenever they protest.

"We are facing severe water crisis as the kiln owners have destroyed the

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Logs piled up at a brick kiln in remote Faitong area of Bandarban's Lama upazila. Top left, an excavator loads sand onto a truck and workers stack bricks near another kiln in the same area, bottom left. Dozens of illegal brick kilns are operating in the remote hilly area, ignoring restrictions from the authorities. PHOTO: SANJAY KUMAR BARUA



SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 13

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-00 5-36 7-00

JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-40 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION